

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 AID-20 COME-00 EB-11 FRB-02 TRSE-00 XMB-07

OPIC-12 CIEP-02 LAB-06 SIL-01 OMB-01 SCEM-02 SCI-06

IO-14 DLOS-06 COA-02 INT-08 AGR-20 EUR-25 SNM-02

DEAE-00 SCA-01 DRC-01 /247 W
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TAGS: PFOR, PGOV, BF

SUBJECT: PINDLING PRESS INTERVIEW

SUMMARY: JANUARY 10 MIAMI HERALD CARRIES FRONT PAGE EXTENDED INTERVIEW WITH PM PINDLING REVIEWING FIRST SIX MONTHS OF BAHAMIAN INDEPENDENCE. PINDLING IS QUOTED AS CITING ECONOMY AS NUMBER ONE PROBLEM, INDICATING CONCERN AT GROWING CRIME, AND DISCUSSING SUCH ISSUES AS BASE TALKS, ARCHIPELAGO PRINCIPLE, RECENT MIAMI RIVER BOMBING AND IMMIGRATION POLICIES.

1. ECONOMY. PINDLING IS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT THE QTE THE MAIN POLITICAL ISSUE IN THE BAHAMAS...IS THE ECONOMIC QUESTION--ANY OTHER WOULD BE WAY, WAY SECOND--HOW THE CONTINUOUS RISE IN PRICES...CAN BE MATCHED BY THE MAN IN THE STREET; HOW THE SHORTAGE OR THE ALLEGED SHORTAGE OF FUEL WILL AFFECT THE EMPLOYMENT PICTURE, THIS COULD HAVE SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS FOR OUR TOURIST INDUSTRY, IT COULD HAVE ENORMOUS IMPACT ON THE COST OF LIVING IN THE BAHAMAS. I WOULD SAY THAT OUR ECONOMY NOW IS SLUGGISH AND THAT IS DUE LARGELY TO CONDITIONS BEYOND OUR CONTROL. UNQTE.
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PINDLING PREDICTED THAT TOURIST SEASON WOULD BE "MEDIocre".

PINDLING MAINTAINED THAT UNEMPLOYMENT WAS AT SEVEN PERCENT, NOTED THAT GOVERNMENT ENDED 1973 WITH A SURPLUS AND POINTED TO SUCH POSITIVE FACTORS AS THE CHASE BANK \$10 MILLION HOUSING LOAN, UN FISHING STUDY, AND "ALL-OUT EFFORT" IN AGRICULTURE, AND PLANS TO DEVELOP INDUSTRY ON THE EAST END OF GRAND BAHAMA.

2. US FACILITIES. PINDLING IS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT TRIPARTITE BASE TALKS HAVE NOT BEEN RESOLVED AS QUICKLY AS HAD BEEN EXPECTED. PINDLING SAID ISSUES ON US SIDE WERE CONTINUED USE OF BASES (CITING AUTEC AS MOST IMPORTANT) AND US PASSAGE THROUGH BAHAMIAN WATERS AND AIRSPACE. BAHAMIAN ISSUES WERE LISTED AS DEFENSE AND SECURITY, FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR USE OF BAHAMIAN TERRITORY AND CONSIDERATIONS OF WHAT TYPE PERSONNEL WOULD BE USED TO MAN THE BASES.

PINDLING SAID QTE SUBSTANTIAL PROGRESS HAS BEEN MADE, BUT THE TALKS HAVE NOT ARRIVED AT A POINT OF SETTLEMENT YET. WE WISH TO AVOID A SOLUTION OF MERELY REPLACING ONE METROPOLITAN POWER (GREAT BRITAIN--SIC) FOR ANOTHER METROPOLITAN POWER. WE DO NOT WANT ANOTHER COLONIAL RULE RELATIONSHIP UNQTE.

3. ARCHIPELAGOS AND FISHERIES PROBLEMS. PINDLING QUITED AS PREDICTING THAT 12 MILE TERRITORIAL SEA WILL BECOME INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTABLE AND THAT LOS CONFERENCE WILL GIVE CONSIDERATION TO ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL LIMITS BEYOND 12 MILES. HE INDICATED THAT ACCEPTANCE OF ARCHIPELAGO PRINCIPLE REMAINS A MAJOR GCOB FOREIGN POLICY GOAL, AND IS RELATED TO DEVELOPMENT OF FISHING INDUSTRY. ON FISHING DISPUTES, HE SAID THAT CONFRONTATIONS WITH MIAMI BASED CUBAN AMERICANS WERE DOWN FROM THE PAST FIVE YEARS AND THAT MIAMI RIVER BOMBING OF BAHAMIAN VESSEL WAS PROBABLY A MISTAKE. BOMBING COULD ALSO HAVE BEEN "TO PROVE A POINT, PERHAPS A WARNING".

*N EITHER CASE, THE BAHAMAS WOULD REGARD THE BOMBING AS AN ISOLATED AND PERHAPS MISTAKEN ACT UNTIL ADDITIONAL INFORMATION PROVED OTHERWISE. PINDLING DISPLAYED AMAZEMENT THAT SUCH AN ACT COULD OCCUR OF US TERRITORY BUT SAID THAT WAS UP TO US ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS.

4. CRIME: PINDLING QUOTED AS EXPRESSING CONCERN OVER RISE IN VIOLENT CRIME IN THE BAHAMAS. HE SOUGHT TO TRACE ORIGINS OF CRIME WAVE TO MAJOR MURDER CASE AND RELATED FNM CAMPAIGN
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ACTIVITIES DURING 1972 GENERAL ELECTION. HE OPINED THAT PERSONS INVOLVED IN THOSE ACTIVITIES WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR SOME OF CURRENT VIOLENT CRIMES. HE ALSO SAID THAT LOCAL POLICE INFORMED HIM THAT A MAJORITY OF PRESENT CRIMES WERE COMMITTED BY NON BAHAMIANS. HE SAID THAT THERE WAS A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN DRUG TRAFFIC THROUGH THE ISLANDS, AND ESTIMATED AND 80 PERCENT INCREASE IN THE AMOUNT OF MARIJUANA COMING IN.

5. IMMIGRATION: PINDLING SAID THAT THE CONTROVERSY OVER WORK PERMITS FOR EXPATRIATES QUOTE WAS LARGELY EMOTIONAL AND POLITICAL. WE UNDOUBTEDLY HAD ADMINISTRATIVE DIFFICULTIES AT THE BEGINNING...BUT NOW IT IS FORMALIZED, AND IT IS GOING QUITE SMOOTHLY. I THINK (BUSINESSES) HAVE COME TO REALIZE NOW THAT THE CHANCES OF FRUSTRATING (THE BAHAMIANIZATION POLICY) ARE NEGLIGIBLE AND IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR ALL CONCERNED IF NOT JUST LIP SERVICE WERE PAID TO THE THING BUT (THEY) REALLY GOT DOWN TO BUSINESS AND TRY TO WORK TOWARD AN AMICABLE SOLUTION UNQUOTE. PINDLING POINTED TO BANKING INDUSTRY AS BEING ESPECIALLY COOPERATIVE IN SETTING UP TRUST FUNDS TO TRAIN BAHAMIANS, ALSO PRAISED HOTEL INDUSTRY, AND SAID THAT GCOB HAD SET UP SYSTEM FOR ALL INDUSTRIES IN WHICH LATTER WOULD PREDICT THEIR NEEDS OVER NEXT 3-5 YEARS AND OUTLINE PROGRAMS FOR TRAINING BAHAMIANS. PINDLING ACKNOWLEDGED THAT IS PAST BLACK BAHAMIAN BUSINESSES CONTROLLED BY PLP SUPPORTERS HAD BEEN FAVORED IN AWARDING CONTRACTS BUT ASSERTED THAT QUOTE TODAY, I WOULD THINK THAT THE COMPETITION IS NOW NORMAL...THE BEST BID, OR THE BEST BID HAVING REGARD TO ALL THE CIRCUMSTANCES, (WOULD BE FAVORED). UNQUOTE. SPIERS

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